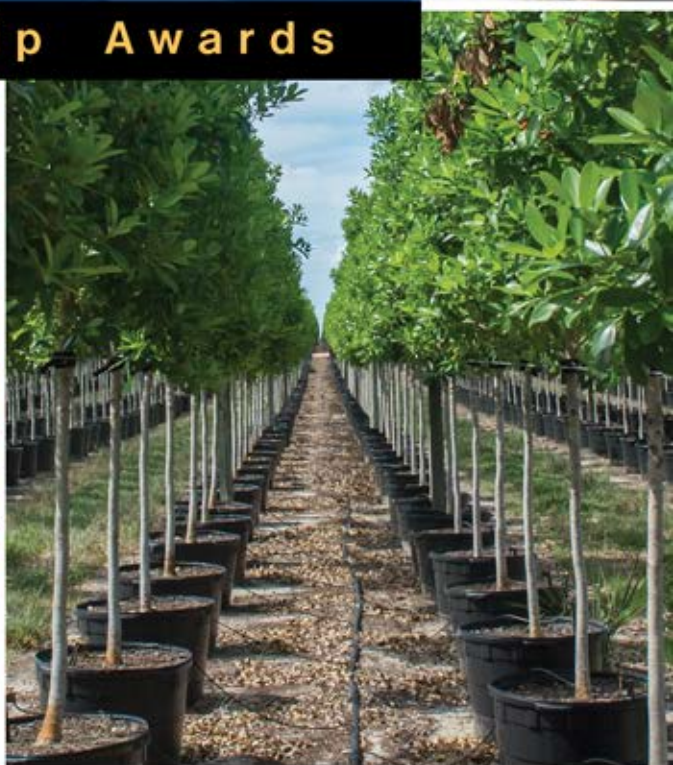
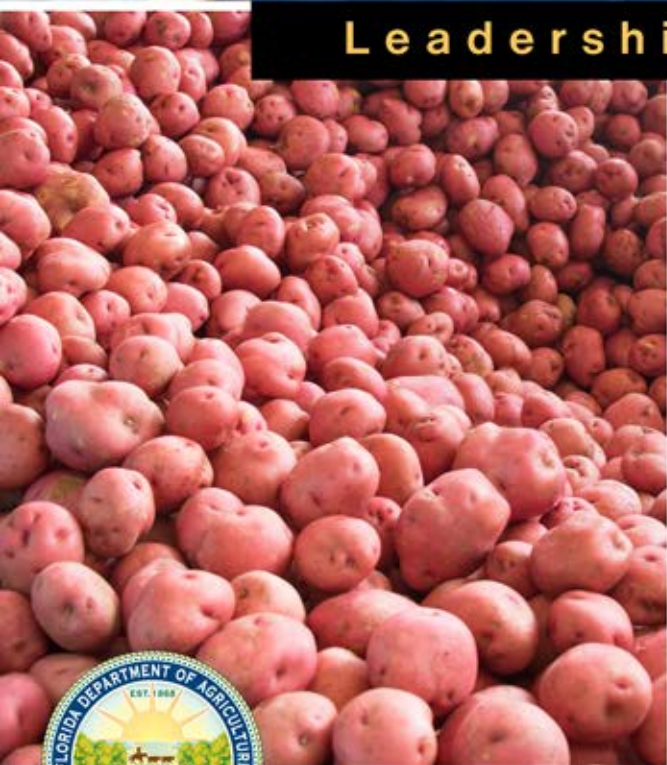




Commissioner's **2016**
Ag-Environmental
Leadership Awards



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Adam H. Putnam, Commissioner





Dear Friends,

It is my great pleasure to recognize the recipients of the 2016 Commissioner's Agricultural Environmental Leadership Award – Jones Potato Farm, Cherrylake and Alliance Dairies. These outstanding operations are pioneers in utilizing environmentally sustainable practices to reduce water use, protect Florida lands and maximize efficiency.

Since 1994, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has recognized agricultural enterprises that demonstrate leadership in developing and implementing innovative and progressive techniques to safeguard the environment and conserve natural resources. It is an honor to highlight the efforts and accomplishments of these environmental stewards who serve as outstanding examples of agricultural guardianship. With their help, we can preserve and maintain Florida's abundant natural resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Adam H. Putnam".

Adam H. Putnam
Commissioner of Agriculture



Jones Potato Farm

Manatee and Hendry counties

America's potato harvest begins with Jones Potato Farm. While the Southwest Florida location enables Jones's crops to be first in the market, the area's sandy soil conditions also presented unique irrigation challenges which Alan Jones has successfully overcome through innovation and technology.





Jones Potato Farm consists of 4,000 acres of potato, green bean and citrus production scattered across northern Manatee and Hendry counties. Alan grows a wide variety of potatoes, but his cash crop is chipping potatoes.

When the area's traditional irrigation methods proved insufficient for potatoes, Alan developed a hybrid system combining drip and center pivot irrigation. This unique watering system has produced high yields and reduced the farm's overall water consumption by over 50 percent. Alan and David Fleming check one of the float wells used to monitor the surficial water table.



Precision agriculture is a central component of the farm's operation, enabling Alan and David Coleman to build fertilizer programs based on detailed mapping and GPS coordinates.



Jones Potato Farm is committed to reducing its carbon footprint by converting its diesel wells to electric. Alan and David Royal inspect one of the farm's electric wells.



In 2014, Alan expanded the farm by purchasing an old citrus grove in LaBelle. A tail water retention pond will maximize production of the land and avoid disruption of the nearby Caloosahatchee River while reducing groundwater withdrawals by up to 40 percent.



Alan discusses this best management practice, that is currently under construction, with Bonnie Wolff Pelaez of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Manatee County
Commissioner Betsy
Benac and other
community leaders
appreciate Alan's passion
for Florida agriculture
and his work on projects
that protect the farming
community.



Alan and his wife Leslie open their farm for school field trips so students
can see first-hand where food comes from.





Alan hosts an annual harvest party to thank his employees for all their hard work.

From left, Harrison, Leslie, Alan, Madeline and Carson Jones.





Cherrylake

Groveland

In the wake of the devastating freezes of 1983 and 1985, the Sallin family began to diversify from their citrus business and started Cherry Lake Tree Farm. Now known as Cherrylake, the growers have earned the reputation as a premier provider of landscape plants and trees in the southeastern United States.





Cherrylake covers 1,800 acres of rolling Central Florida hillsides, growing 84 varieties of palms, trees and shrubs, and outsourced material.

From propagating and cultivating cuttings in their greenhouses, to pruning and growth maintenance in the fields, every stage is handled with attention to detail.





Cherrylake provides turnkey landscape and irrigation construction services, landscape maintenance solutions and horticultural expertise for commercial and community developments, theme parks and resorts across Florida and the nation.

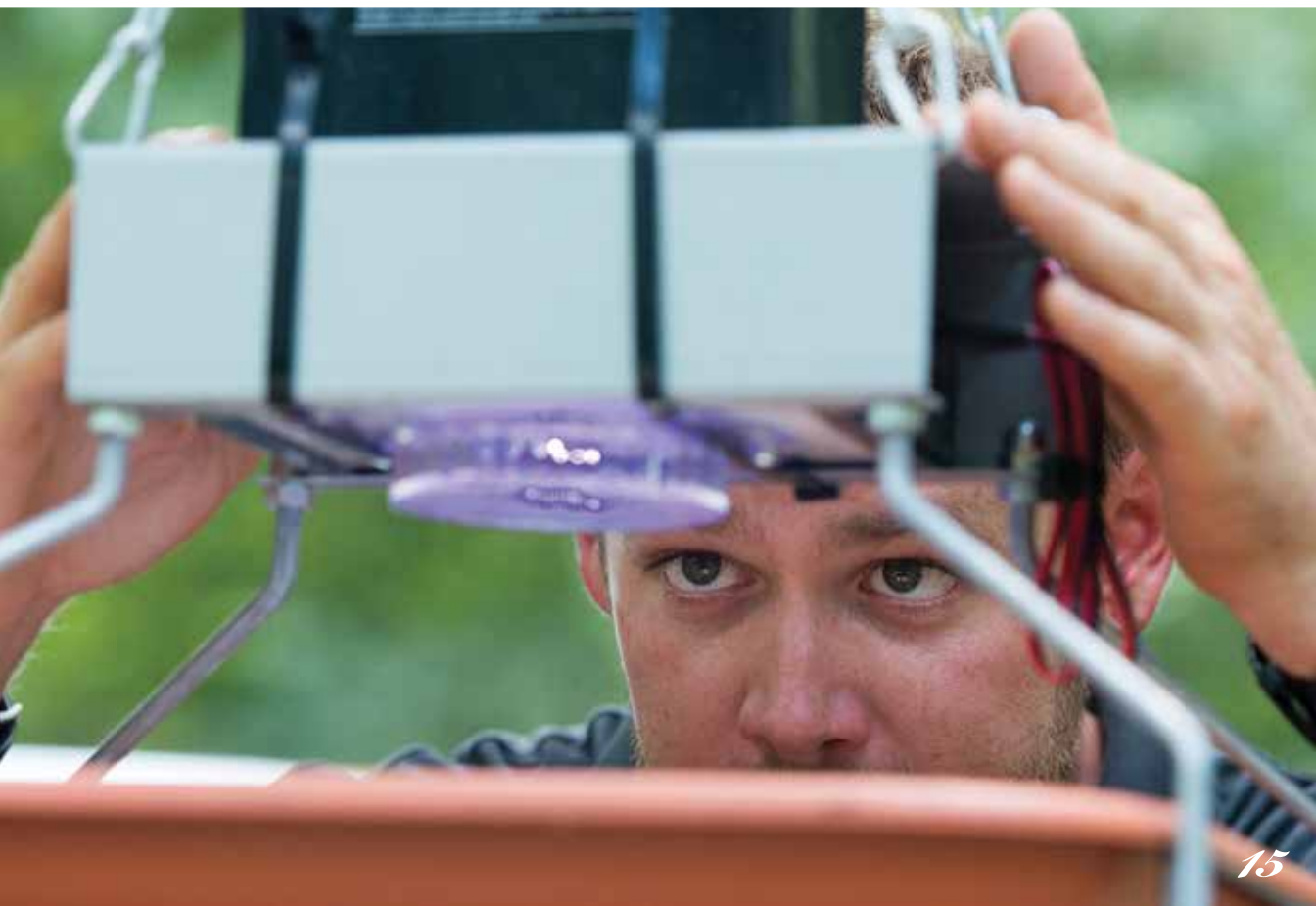


Cherrylake has partnered with numerous professionals and state universities to pioneer best management practices. Through these practices, the farm will reduce its water consumption by an estimated 75 million to 90 million gallons annually.





Cherrylake has an integrated pest management program that includes scouts and LED light traps that monitor for the presence of harmful insects. When needed, the farm can employ environmentally conscientious pest control treatments.



The Cherrylake viewpoint is that even small incremental changes produce large savings. For instance, Air Pots are used to prevent circling roots in plants and trees. By recycling all of these containers in-house, Cherrylake can keep its trees and plants healthy while being environmentally responsible.





Cherrylake donated a thousand bald cypress trees for the restoration of the north shore of Lake Apopka. This will help re-establish water filtration and rebuild wildlife habitats.



Cherrylake has built a culture of honest and open communication in its farming practices, while focusing on the personal and professional growth of employees.





From left, Todd and Chloe Gentry, Timothee Sallin, Veronique and Michel Sallin, and Melanie Ressler.





Alliance Dairies

Trenton

Located in the Suwannee River Basin, Alliance Dairies of Trenton is a sustainable and profitable business model for dairies around the world. Recycling is a key component of the operation.





Alliance Dairies was founded in 1990 by Ron St. John, a second-generation dairyman who grew up on his family's dairy farm in New York State. Ron's daughter Jan Henderson now serves as CEO. A 24-hour operation, the dairy produces nearly 18.5 million gallons of milk each year.

Ron and Jan discuss day-to-day operations with Office Manager Charlie Smith.



From citrus pulp to distiller's grains, industry byproducts once destined for the landfill are mixed together using a computer-aided loader to ensure that each cow gets exactly the nutrients it needs.



Ron contends that a happy cow produces the best milk. The cows are kept in free-stall barns and cooled using water sprinklers and large fans. Sand bedding, which is routinely cleaned and reused, provides the cows with maximum comfort.





Concrete floors in the barns and milk parlors allow animal waste to be flushed down “Main Street.” The effluent is passed through several large screens that remove solids before being used to flush the barns or sprayed onto nearby fields to fertilize feed crops. This process recycles about 80 percent of the water coming out of the barns.





Since 2012, manure has produced 70 percent of the electricity used by Alliance Dairies. Effluent is sent to a manure digester where the waste breaks down and releases methane gas that is sent to a generator to produce electricity. Longer than a football field, 16 feet deep and 150 feet wide, the digester can hold seven million gallons of effluent.



The dairy, which employs more than 150 people with a variety of backgrounds and skills, has its own full-time construction crew. Farm Manager Todd Kranz oversees the building of a new barn.



Expanding internationally, Alliance Dairies has a dairy operation in Panama and plans for another in Botswana. Tumie Kebinaefe, an intern from Botswana, is learning how to run a large dairy operation.

Herd Manager Amadeo De Paz maintains a herd of 6,500 cows.



Noting that over the 90 percent of the olive oil sold in the United States is imported, Ron sees a great opportunity to start a new business. Ron's wife Marcia and daughter Brooke have joined him in the olive growing venture.



The strong focus by Alliance Dairies on capturing and recycling waste helps protect the Suwannee River which is located a few miles away.

The Alliance Dairies extended family.



Previous Winners

- 2015** Carlton and Carlton Ranch - Hillsborough
Dasher Farm - McAlpin
Bull Hammock Ranch - Fort Pierce
- 2014** Agri-Starts, Inc. - Apopka
Riverdale Potato Farm, Inc. - Elkton
Milking R, Inc. - Okeechobee
- 2013** Kissimmee Park Properties, LLC - St. Cloud
Ferris Farms - Floral City
Farmton Tree Farm - Osteen
- 2012** Deroose Plants, Inc. - Apopka
Southern Accent Farm - Okeechobee
- 2011** Straughn Farms, LLC - Waldo
- 2010** Saturiwa Conservation Area - Elkton
3 Boys Farm - Ruskin
Arapaho Citrus Management - Fort Pierce
- 2009** Dairy Production Systems - High Springs
Loop's Nursery - Jacksonville
- 2008** Carroll Brothers Nursery - Clearwater
Brock Family Farm - Monticello
- 2007** Butler Oaks Farm - Lorida
Gwinn Brothers Farm - McAlpin
Buck Island Ranch - Lake Placid
Fraleigh Nursery - Madison
- 2006** Tampa Wholesale Nursery - Dover
Riverview Flower Farm - Riverview
Lightsey Cattle Company - Lake Wales
- 2005** Kerry's Bromeliad Nursery - Homestead
Larson Dairy - Okeechobee
Richard N. Raid, Ph.D. - Royal Palm Beach
- 2004** Blue Heron Groves - Lakeland
M&B Products - Tampa
McArthur Farms - Port St. Lucie
- 2003** Williamson Cattle Company - Okeechobee
Sun City Tree Farm - Ruskin
Aquatika Tropicals - Plant City
- 2002** Holloway Irrigation Systems - Leesburg
Daniel A. Botts - Orlando
Sanwa Growers - Wimauma
- 2001** Carlton 2x4 Ranch - Arcadia
Barthle Brothers Ranch - San Antonio
- 2000** Pacific Tomato Growers - Palmetto
Evans Properties - Vero Beach
- 1999** Two Rivers Ranch - Thonotosassa
Lykes Bros. - Okeechobee
Suwannee Farms - O'Brien
- 1998** Longino Ranch - Arcadia
V&W Farms - Avon Park
- 1997** Anclote River Ranch - Odessa
- 1996** Edward "Jack" Campbell - Homestead
Citrus World - Lake Wales
Eckwill Waterlife Resources - Gibsonton
- 1995** Schroeder Manatee Ranch - Bradenton
Burt McKee - Tampa
Davie Dairy - Okeechobee
O.F. Nelson and Sons Nursery - Apopka
Bright Hour Ranch - Arcadia
Deseret Ranches of Florida - St. Cloud
Fulford Farms - Monticello
- 1994** Rafter T Cattle Company - Avon Park
A. Duda and Sons - Oviedo
Babcock Florida Company - Punta Gorda
Gustafson's Dairy - Green Cove Springs
Jon's Nursery - Eustis
Adams Ranch - Fort Pierce

